

## BOOK REVIEWS

J. C. Naylor, R. D. Pritchard, and D. R. Ilgen: *A Theory of Behavior in Organizations*. New York: Academic Press, 1980.

THIS BOOK presents a theory of behavior in organizations. It is noteworthy in the effort by its authors to define a point of view and to pursue that view to some of its conclusions. The view is psychological and phenomenological, with a focus on conscious, choice behavior. Organization as a "macro entity" plays an incidental role, and the authors confess to being sometimes uncomfortable with the notion that they have a theory of "organizational behavior," a term, they point out, that has been referred to in the literature as "utter nonsense."

The authors assume that behavior for the most part is "rational" and that individuals act (i.e., make choices) to maximize their net positive affect. Starting with the general,  $S \leftrightarrow O \rightarrow R$  paradigm, they spell out a detailed model that includes a place for environmental (i.e., organizational) variables as well as personal variables such as individual differences, perception of self, valence of outcomes, utility of acts, affect, and others. It is the personal variables rather than the environmental ones that the authors stress. The theory predicts behavior by taking these variables into account along with an elaborate set of probabilistic relationships, or "contingencies," including the contingencies between (a) an act by an individual and the "product" or "result" of the act, (b) the "amount" or "quality" of the product was perceived by an "evaluator" and an evaluation by the evaluator, and (c) the evaluation and the "outcome" (reward) given to the individual. The rationality of behavior suggested by the theory resembles that of so-called path-goal models and expectancy theories.

The authors are serious in their commitment to a phenomenological view. Understanding organization is not so important to predicting the behavior of members as is understanding members' conscious perceptions of the organization. The authors

therefore do not claim to have a theory of organizations, and they do not have much to say about organization as such. They do, however, devote chapters to several terms—role, organizational climate, and leadership—that, in a theory of organizations, might have referents outside the cognition of members. It is interesting, therefore, to see how they approach these terms within their phenomenological framework. "Roles," for example, "only can be considered cognitive structures within the belief systems of individuals" (p. 158). "[R]ole is a vector of perceived product-to-evaluation contingencies" (p. 125). "Climate can be viewed as the judgment process involved in attributing a class of human-like traits to an entity outside the individual where this entity may be a work group or even an entire organization" (p. 254). Leadership, however, is an exception to the definition of these concepts in purely phenomenological terms. Leadership is not a cognition; it is the exercise of influence. More specifically, the authors agree with Katz and Kahn's definition of leadership as "the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with routine directives of the organization" (quoted by the authors [p. 230] from Katz and Kahn, 1978, p. 528). Nonetheless, they are consistent with their general, psychological approach by treating leadership as a personal or interpersonal process rather than as part of a larger, managerial system including nonincremental as well as incremental influence, as do Katz and Kahn.

Theories of behavior are bound to be controversial among psychologists. The roots of the controversy go deep; they relate to basic differences among psychologists in the way they think about the world and in the character of the concepts that they believe are important. The difference between a phenomenological and behavioristic approach to describing and explaining the phenomena of psychology illustrates one such difference. Assumptions about rationality and about the relative importance of social system and personal variables illustrate further sources of controversy. Thus, some readers will approach *A Theory*

of *Behavior in Organizations* more hopefully than will others, depending on their predilections regarding the authors' assumptions. The book will have the advantage for many readers, whether they agree or disagree with the authors' assumptions, of stating those assumptions early.

Theories in general do not make for easy reading and this book is no exception. Authors must place a premium on clear prose, precise definitions, tight, logical arguments, and a compulsive concern for consistency if they intend to minimize the inevitable difficulty readers face in trying to understand a theory. Unfortunately, this book does not always meet these criteria. The book contains unnecessary and confusing jargon, seemingly circular arguments and non sequiturs, and a number of errors, some of them at crucial points. Long-winded statements may turn out to be such simple truisms, if not tautologies, that the reader might find him/herself struggling to discover a hidden meaning. What is one to make of statements like, "To summarize, we are saying that the extent to which an individual perceives a given psychological climate dimension to exist in a work setting involves the degree to which specific external environmental characteristics are perceived by the individual in the environment" (p. 254) or "The level of affect towards rewards received on a job exists at some level at any point in time, and can be measured. Such measurements can be useful in assessing how positively or negatively the individual evaluates the rewards he or she is receiving" (p. 38).

The authors also appear to be ambivalent, and therefore ambiguous, about the concept of organization itself. On the one hand, they insist that organization as an objective reality is very important. On the other hand, given their phenomenological perspective, they do not say much about how organization is important. The concept remains undefined and allusions to it imply a vague if not chimerical background for individual behavior. A reader might try to understand what the authors mean by organization from statements like, "Organization are [sic] collections of two or more people. As a result almost every organization member works closely with others" (p.

228) or "The physical and technical system of an organization can be viewed as thousands of stimuli that impinge upon the individual" (p. 227) or "[T]he environment [i.e., organization] is a system that acts very much like an organism in its own right" (p. 23).

The authors' assertion that organization is a system, whether like a biological organism or not, provokes a question about their basic premise that it is possible to have a theory of behavior in organizations without a theory of organizations. It is hard to avoid the implication, if one takes a systems view, that understanding the organization as a system provides a basis for understanding the behavior of members since, after all, this behavior is part of the system. But this is a controversial view among organizational psychologists. Unfortunately, the present theory, which takes a position on this controversy, is not likely to settle it.

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**Geert Hofstede:** *Culture's Consequences: International Differences In Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills, London: Sage Publications, 1980, 475 pp.

**T**HIS BOOK is, as its secondary title claims, a study in international differences in work-related values. The data for the study were collected via two surveys from subsidiaries located in different nations of a large international corporation. Approximately 117,000 completed questionnaires from employees were collected between 1967 and 1973. Using factor analysis as a principal analytical tool, Hofstede develops four dimensions to demonstrate how work groups in various nations differ. The four dimensions, or factors, are labeled power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. Data from other sources, some of which were also collected by Hofstede, are used to support the survey findings. The extensive bibliography in the book make it a valuable reference for those interested in specific dimensions of cultural attributes.